

Eight-Year-Old Suspended 38 Times for Not Wearing a Mask

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Fiona Lashells, an 8-year-old in second grade in Florida, was subjected to an outrageous 38 school suspensions for not wearing a mask in school
- › Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued an executive order ruling that school districts could not require students to wear masks, ensuring parents' freedom to choose whether or not their children wear masks in school
- › The Palm Beach County school district reinstated their mask requirement, forcing Fiona to miss nearly two months of school; the school district repealed its mask mandate November 8, 2021, and now offers a face mask opt-out for parents
- › Mandating schoolchildren to wear masks daily is an unprecedented public health move that's not backed by science
- › A Cochrane study published in November 2020 found masks do little to nothing to slow down the spread of respiratory viruses, while adverse health risks to children include headaches, exhaustion and a decrease in blood oxygen saturation
- › Fiona's story is proof that every individual has the power to make a difference; if you don't agree with student mask mandates, contact your local school district and let them know

Fiona Lashells, an 8-year-old in second grade in Florida, was subjected to an outrageous 38 school suspensions for standing up for her right to not do something that isn't supported by data and science in a school system — wearing a mask.

July 30, 2021, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued an executive order ruling that school districts could not require students to wear masks, ensuring parents' freedom to choose whether or not their children wear masks in school.¹

After the executive order was issued, Fiona's mother told her she wouldn't have to wear a mask for the upcoming school year, a relief to the girl, who had complained about fatigue from wearing a mask during the previous school year.² The Palm Beach County school district, however, had other plans, which culminated in the student missing nearly two months of school.

Student Forced to Miss Months of School Over Mask Mandate

At first, when Fiona arrived at school without a mask, she had to eat lunch alone in a hallway outside the office of an administrator. However, soon in-school suspensions began, followed by out-of-school suspensions.³ Despite the state's executive order banning school mask mandates, the school district had reinstated the requirement.

"We promised her she wouldn't have to wear a mask," her mother told The Daily Wire. "I think that's what upset her so much. We had made that promise to her at the beginning of the year." Fiona, meanwhile, said, "I'm not wearing a mask because you touch it, and you have germs on your hand. And then you put it on your face and breathe in all the germs."⁴

After 38 suspensions, the Palm Beach County school district repealed its mask mandate November 8, 2021, telling parents November 6:⁵

"Based on a new development at the State level, the School District will be moving to an opt-out status for facial coverings for students in all grade levels beginning this Monday, November 8, rather than on November 15 as you were originally informed.

A ruling yesterday by Division of Administrative Hearings Judge Newman found the Department of Health's Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 to be valid, therefore, a parent face covering opt-out will be reinstated effective Monday."

Now that masks are optional, Fiona was able to return to school, and 10% of the students in the district have opted out of wearing masks.⁶ At schools across the U.S., however, students are still being forced to wear masks for hours at a time every day, despite lack of evidence showing they work – and concerning data suggesting they can cause harm.

How Effective Are Masks? No One Knows

Mandating schoolchildren to wear masks daily is an unprecedented public health move – one that hasn't been validated. “[W]earing masks by children and students on the effects of slowing down the spread of the virus in schools has never been studied in a randomized controlled trial,” Carla Peeters, founder and managing director of COBALA Good Care Feels Better, who has a Ph.D. in immunology from the Medical Faculty of Utrecht, wrote for the Brownstone Institute.⁷

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lied about masks' effectiveness November 5, 2021, when CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky tweeted, “Masks can help reduce your chance of #COVID19 infection by more than 80%.”⁸

Walensky didn't give a reference for her claim that masks reduce COVID-19 infection by 80%, but a large study from researchers at Yale, Stanford and the University of California Berkeley found much less impressive results from masks.

The trial involved 342,183 people from 600 villages in rural Bangladesh from November 2020 to April 2021.⁹ In villages that received masks, the number of symptomatic COVID-19 infections were 9.3%¹⁰ lower compared to villages without masks, or 11% lower in villages that received surgical masks instead of cloth masks.

Moreover, a Cochrane study published in November 2020 found masks do little to nothing to slow down the spread of respiratory viruses:¹¹

“Seven studies took place in the community, and two studies in healthcare workers. Compared with wearing no mask, wearing a mask may make little to no difference in how many people caught a flu-like illness (9 studies; 3507

people); and probably makes no difference in how many people have flu confirmed by a laboratory test.”

A February 2021 report from the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control also admitted, “Evidence for the effectiveness of non-medical face masks, face shields/visors and respirators in the community is scarce and of very low certainty.”¹²

Did Sweden Get It Right?

Sweden handled the pandemic differently than most of the globe and has been chided for its looser restrictions and lack of severe lockdowns. It also did not institute a mask mandate, only recommending them at times, such as when using crowded public transportation.¹³

The country’s state epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell, has stated that there’s little evidence for wearing face masks¹⁴ and that shutting down schools was also unnecessary during the pandemic. Scientists from the Institut Pasteur in France indeed found that there was no significant transmission of COVID-19 in primary schools, either among the students or from students to teachers.¹⁵

“The study also confirmed that younger children infected by the novel coronavirus generally do not develop symptoms or present with minor symptoms that may result in a failure to diagnose the virus,” study author Bruno Hoen added.¹⁶

Opening a Window Worked Better Than Masks in Schools

Magical thinking regarding masks persists, even as solid evidence shows improved ventilation, such as opening a window, may work better at battling COVID-19 in schools than universal masking.

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study compared the incidence of COVID-19 in Georgia kindergarten through grade 5 schools¹⁷ that were open for in-person learning in fall 2020 with various recommended prevention strategies, such as

mandatory masks and improvements to ventilation. The first important statistic is the COVID-19 incidence, which was extremely low.

At the 169 schools that participated in the survey, there were only 3.08 COVID-19 cases among students and staff members per 500 enrolled students, from November 16, 2020 to December 11, 2020. After adjusting for county-level incidence, the study revealed that COVID-19 incidence was 37% lower in schools that required teachers and staff members to use masks and 39% lower in schools that improved ventilation, compared to schools that did not use these strategies.

Let's use a school with 500 students as an example, which would have an incidence of just over three cases. Even with a 37% reduction in incidence from staff members wearing masks, that only reduced incidence by about one case in the entire school. Further, ventilation led to better outcomes, reducing incidence by 39%.

Dilution methods, which work by diluting the number of airborne particles, include opening windows and doors or using fans. This led to a 35% lower incidence of COVID-19, while methods to filter airborne particles, such as using HEPA filtration systems with or without ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, led to a 48% lower incidence.

These were the findings when masks were used by teachers and staff. When students were masked, virtually no difference was found. According to the study:¹⁸

"The 21% lower incidence in schools that required mask use among students was not statistically significant compared with schools where mask use was optional. This finding might be attributed to higher effectiveness of masks among adults, who are at higher risk for SARS-CoV-2 infection but might also result from differences in mask-wearing behavior among students in schools with optional requirements."

Effects on Health and Environment Overlooked

Mandatory masking isn't an innocuous case of "it can't hurt to try," as negative effects are apparent. A cluster of symptoms known as mask-induced exhaustion syndrome

(MIES) have been described, with researchers warning that children, pregnant women and those who are sick or suffering from certain chronic conditions may be particularly at risk from extended masking.

While short-term effects include microbiological contamination, headaches, exhaustion, carbon dioxide retention and skin irritation, the long-term effects may lead to chronic issues:¹⁹

“Extended mask-wearing would have the potential, according to the facts and correlations we have found, to cause a chronic sympathetic stress response induced by blood gas modifications and controlled by brain centers. This in turn induces and triggers immune suppression and metabolic syndrome with cardiovascular and neurological diseases.”

Significant adverse effects and pathophysiological changes, including the following, often occur in combination due to masks:²⁰

Increase in dead space volume	Increase in breathing resistance	Increase in blood carbon dioxide
Decrease in blood oxygen saturation	Increase in heart rate	Decrease in cardiopulmonary capacity
Feeling of exhaustion	Increase in respiratory rate	Difficulty breathing and shortness of breath
Headache	Dizziness	Feeling of dampness and heat
Drowsiness	Decrease in empathy perception	Impaired skin barrier function with acne, itching and skin lesions

Again, researchers noted, that children may be particularly at risk. “It can be assumed,” they wrote, “that the potential adverse mask effects described for adults are all the more valid for children: ... physiological internal, neurological, psychological, psychiatric, dermatological, ENT, dental, sociological, occupational and social medical, microbiological and epidemiological impairments ...) ...

The masks currently used for children are exclusively adult masks manufactured in smaller geometric dimensions and had neither been specially tested nor approved for this purpose.”²¹

Meanwhile, the effects of disposable masks on the environment are atrocious, with an estimated 3.4 million masks and face shields discarded daily worldwide.²² The plastics, micro- and nanoscale fibers and particles and heavy metals, including lead, antimony and copper, they contain raise significant environmental and public health concerns.²³

Peeters wrote:²⁴

“The influence of harmful compounds, nanoparticles and biocides in masks on children, adults, animals, plants and the environment have not been intensively investigated so far. However based on the available peer-reviewed scientific articles the possible harmful effects on health of healthcare workers is known and an increase in infections and chronic diseases could have been expected.”

No More Masks for Healthy People

Peeters believes all mask mandates should be repealed immediately, due to their lack of effectiveness at curbing the spread of disease and potential for adverse effects, from MIES and a “waning innate immune system” to self-contamination and environmental harm.

Fiona’s story is proof that every individual has the power to make a difference. If you don’t agree with student mask mandates either, contact your local school district and let them know. As Peeters noted:²⁵

“It is time to stop mask mandates for healthy people. It is no longer possible to justify a behavioral experiment with such far-reaching harmful consequences. Many scientific studies and analysis all arrive at the same conclusion: the wearing of masks by healthy people cannot stop the spread of a virus.

People without any symptoms tested and a positive PCR test (due to the presence of a nonviable piece of RNA) rarely spread a virus. The most important magic rule is from ancestral wisdom: rest and go to bed when experiencing Covid or flu-like symptoms. Strengthening the immune system with a healthy food and lifestyle will decrease the risk for infections and chronic diseases.”

Sources and References

- ¹ [Flgov.com, Ron Desantis July 30, 2021](#)
- ^{2, 3, 4, 5} [The Daily Wire November 14, 2021](#)
- ⁶ [The Palm Beach Post November 14, 2021](#)
- ^{7, 22, 24, 25} [Brownstone Institute November 15, 2021](#)
- ⁸ [Twitter, Rochelle Walensky November 5, 2021](#)
- ⁹ [The Impact of Community Masking on COVID-19: A Cluster-Randomized Trial in Bangladesh November 8, 2021](#)
- ¹⁰ [ABC Action News September 1, 2021](#)
- ¹¹ [Cochrane November 20, 2020](#)
- ¹² [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control February 15, 2021](#)
- ¹³ [Business Insider June 5, 2021](#)
- ¹⁴ [Bloomberg June 24, 2020](#)
- ^{15, 16} [Institut Pasteur June 23, 2020](#)
- ^{17, 18} [U.S. CDC, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report May 21, 2021](#)
- ^{19, 20, 21} [Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Apr; 18\(8\): 4344](#)
- ²³ [Swansea University May 5, 2021](#)